

REMARKS

Priority

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim for priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119.

Status of the Application

Claims 1-11 and 13-32 are all the claims pending in the application as claim 12 is hereby cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1, 4-7, 9-11, 13, 17, 20, 23, 24 and 26 are also amended. These are merely clarifying amendments, and are not believed to affect the scope of claims 1, 4-7, 9-11, 13, 17, 20, 23, 24 and 26 in any way, and no estoppel is intended.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 1-3, 5-19 and 21-32 due to informalities. The informalities noted by the Examiner have been corrected. Thus, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 6 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. The informalities noted by the Examiner have been corrected. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-7, 15-23, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun (Japanese Patent Laid-open 2001-266018, hereinafter "Jun"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Jun. Claim 1 claims an internet connection service providing method, wherein a service class preset for each user is a subject of authentication when logging-in to a network, the preset service class for a logged-in user is recognized, and a service corresponding to the recognized service class is provided to the pertinent user.

The Examiner takes the position that the features in this claim are disclosed by the Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun. Specifically, the Examiner quotes the translation of Jun, paragraph [0032] where, "...Vendor Q set up beforehand the content of the service offered for every customer ID..." and contends that this corresponds to a service class preset for each user and is a subject of authentication when logging-in to a network. The Examiner quotes the translation of Jun, paragraph [0032], "which is transmitted in addition to this, and holds it, and every which it connects..." and contends that this corresponds to a preset service class for a logged-in user which is recognized. The Examiner quotes the translation of Jun, paragraph [0032], "...customer P is provided with the content of service..." and contends that this corresponds to a service corresponding to the recognized service class provided to the pertinent user.

In contrast, Applicant respectfully submits that Jun fails to teach or suggest the features of claim 1. Specifically, Jun does not teach or suggest the use of service classes. When Jun refers to calculating fees, he refers only to the connection time and amount of data. Jun does not mention different classes of service which, if existed, would have an effect on the calculation of fees. For example, the translation of Jun discloses, "...computing said connection fees based on the **connect time to the communication link** [and] **amount of data** [of] said Internet at the time of accessing said Internet" (paragraph [0013]), asserting that only the connection time and amount of data processed is used to compute the connection fee, and the level of service is not factored into the computation because such a level does not exist. The Applicant's claim discloses features specific to service classes. For example, "an internet connection service providing method, wherein a **service class** preset for each user is a subject of authentication when logging-in to a network, the preset **service class** for a logged-in user is recognized, and a service corresponding to the recognized **service class** is provided to the pertinent user".

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is patentable over the applied reference. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that rejected dependent claims 2, 3, 5-16, and 19 are allowable *at least* by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Claim 4

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 4 is patentable over Jun. Claim 4 claims an internet connection service providing method, wherein, *inter alia*, user management data concerning service classes preset for individual users and service class correspondence data representing service contents corresponding to the service classes are provided as a system in the ISP, and a service corresponding to each user utilizing the internet connection service is

provided, as desired, based on the user management data and the service class correspondence data irrespective of which of the plurality of places the connection is established from.

The Examiner takes the position that the features in this claim are disclosed by the Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun.

In contrast, Applicant respectfully submits that Jun fails to teach or suggest the features of claim 4. As the Applicant has submitted above, Jun does not teach or suggest the use of service classes. The Applicant's claim discloses features specific to service classes. For example, "user management data concerning **service classes** preset for individual users and **service class** correspondence data representing service contents corresponding to the **service classes** are provide as a system in the ISP" and "a service corresponding to each user utilizing the internet connection service is provided based on the user management data and the **service class** correspondence data irrespective of which of the plurality of places a connection is established from".

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 4 is patentable over the applied reference.

Claim 17

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 17 is patentable over Jun. Claim 17 claims an internet connection service system applicable for carrying out the method as set forth in claim 1, comprising, *inter alia*, a service server, the service server being arranged to provide services and charge fees to the users based on service class data for managing service classes capable of being utilized by the users and fee management data for managing the state of fee charging for each user.

The Examiner takes the position that the features in this claim are disclosed by the Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun.

In contrast, Applicant respectfully submits that Jun fails to teach or suggest the features of claim 17. As the Applicant has submitted above, Jun does not teach or suggest the user of service classes. The Applicant's claim discloses features specific to service classes. For example, "the service server being arranged to provide services and charge fees to the users based on **service class data** for managing **service classes** capable of being utilized by the users...".

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 17 is patentable over the applied reference. Further, Applicant respectfully submits that rejected dependent claims 18 and 21-32 are allowable, *at least* by virtue of their dependency on claim 17.

Claim 20

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 20 is patentable over Jun. Claim 20 claims a internet connection service system applicable to carrying out the method as set forth in claim 4, which further comprises a user management database capable of providing internet connection service in a plurality of different places under management by an ISP (internet service provider) and having data concerning the service classes preset for each user, and a service class correspondence table representing service contents corresponding to the service classes, respectively, a service being provided to users utilizing the internet connection service based on the user management database and the service class correspondence table irrespective of which of the plurality of places the connection is established from.

The Examiner takes the position that the features in this claim are disclosed by the Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun.

In contrast, Applicant respectfully submits that Jun fails to teach or suggest the features of claim 20. As the Applicant has submitted above, Jun does not teach or suggest the use of service classes. The Applicant's claim discloses features specific to service classes. For example, "...having data corresponding to **service classes** each preset for each user, and a **service class correspondence table** representing service contents corresponding to the **service classes**...".

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 20 is patentable over the applied reference.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 8-14, and 24-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun.

In contrast, Applicant respectfully submits claims 8-14, and 24-31 are patentable over Jun. Applicant has submitted claim 1 as patentable above. Claims 8-14 are dependent on claim 1 and are patentable *at least* by virtue of their dependency. Applicant has submitted claim 17 as patentable above. Claims 24-31 are dependent on claim 17 and are patentable *at least* by virtue of their dependency.

The Examiner has rejected claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art by Jun further in view of Applicant's admitted prior art by Kawano (Japanese Patent Laid-open 2001-298484; hereinafter "Kawano"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 31

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 31 is patentable over Jun. Claim 31 claims an internet connection service system which comprises, *inter alia*, a QoS (quality of service) unit

for controlling a preset QoS for each user's service class, and the service server has a communication quality managing table, in which communication qualities of services are preset.

The Examiner acknowledges that Jun does not disclose a QoS (quality of service) unit. Instead, the Examiner relies on Kawano to teach this feature.

In contrast, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 31 is patentable over Jun in view of Kawano. While Kawano does teach using a QoS method to distinguish service classes, there are in fact many ways to implement a "quality of service". Kawano teaches establishing a quality of service to users by allowing "A user chooses the service conditions for which self wishes from the service condition offer screen displayed on user...1. bandwidth...2. post-dialing delay permissible dose...and 3. toll" (paragraph [0036]). Clearly, Kawano is teaching a restriction of bandwidth as the main distinguishing factor between service classes. However as the Applicant discloses in the background of the present invention, Kawano's teachings make it impossible to ensure impartial service provision to the users in the sense of internet access speed for the user. The Applicant's use of QoS is distinct to that of Kawano. Referring to Fig. 24 of the present invention, Applicant's differentiation of service classes constitute restriction of content, not bandwidth. Applicant's use of QoS is when certain tasks require a constant bandwidth, such as the internet telephone allowed to Service Class A in said figure. However QoS is by no means the definition of a service class as is taught by Kawano.

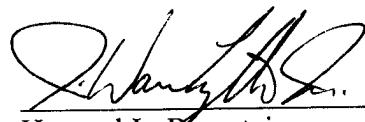
Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 20 is patentable over the applied reference.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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